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FM AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 8464
INFO RUCNCOM/EC CARICOM COLLECTIVE
RUEHAO/AMCONSUL CURACAO 1048
RUEHTC/AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE 1558
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 1436
RUEHBR/USDAO BRASILIA BR
RUEAWJA/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC
RHMFISS/HQ USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 PARAMARIBO 000391

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

DEPT FOR WHA/CAR LLUFTIG, INL/LP NBOZZOLO, KBROWN
SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD
CARACAS FOR LEGAAT

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [SNAR](#) [KCRM](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [NS](#)

SUBJECT: SURINAME MAKING EFFORTS TO SECURE BORDER WITH
GUYANA

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REFTEL: (A) PARAMARIBO 382 (B) PARAMARIBO 223 (C)
PARAMARIBO 33 (D) PARAMARIBO 103

11. (SBU) Summary. Cross-border crime between Suriname and Guyana has been on the rise over the past year. Drugs, cash, goods, gold, arms, and people are smuggled across the poorly controlled border regularly through what is called the "back-track." This term generally refers to the multiple routes available to cross the Corantijn River by boat and enter either Suriname or Guyana at various uncontrolled points along the riverbank to avoid customs or immigration. In recognition of the problem, the Government of Suriname (GOS) is developing a strategy to bring the criminality under control to build upon recent successful operations, including the recent arrest of Guyanese criminal ringleader Shaheed Roger Khan. (See ref A). Future success, though, will depend heavily on increased resource availability and improved cooperation with Guyanese counterparts. End Summary.

12. (SBU) Suriname's recent success in drug interdiction and dismantling narcotics rings have driven criminal organizations westward into Guyana, according to senior GOS officials. Drug drops are made in Guyana, broken up into smaller parcels, and then smuggled over the Corantijn River into Suriname for overland transport to Paramaribo. There is also an active arms-for-drugs trade across the border, according to Suriname's Attorney General (See ref B), while a recent government report revealed a doubling of drug dealers in Nickerie over the last two years. The smuggling of gold and cash is also reportedly on the rise.

13. (SBU) To stem the smuggling, the GOS has focused law enforcement efforts on Guyanese-Surinamese criminal connections over the past year. Its most significant success to date was the June 15 arrest of Shaheed Roger Khan, a major Guyanese narcotics trafficker with an outstanding U.S. arrest warrant. Increased roadblocks placed between Paramaribo and the border have led to greater number of seizures and arrests, most recently the May arrest of a Guyanese man in possession of four kilograms of marijuana. Nickerie police seized a total of 108 kilograms of cocaine in 2005. In January, police seized

USD 391,000 from a Guyanese man attempting to board a boat to Guyana after leaping from a helicopter that dropped him on the bank of the Corantijn River. (See ref C). Police also arrested a brothel owner in Nickerie on suspicion of Trafficking in Persons (TIP) in February. (See ref D).

¶4. (SBU) Police are heightening their cooperation with their military counterparts stationed in Nickerie, particularly the small marine contingent, to patrol the river. For example, a marine patrol seized 3.5 kilograms of marijuana from two Guyanese and a Surinamer crossing the Corantijn River in March; the three suspects were immediately turned over to police. Both sides, however, remain hampered by insufficient marine resources. The marine wing has only one boat permanently stationed in Nickerie. Recent public complaints that Guyanese boat patrols along the Corantijn River violate Suriname's territorial sovereignty complicate efforts.

¶5. (U) To develop a long-term strategy to regulate the "back-track," the GOS installed an interagency commission of representatives from the district government, police, military (including military police), and customs in 2005. It is working in tandem with an interagency commission tasked with reviewing Suriname's immigration policy. By June 29, the commissions are expected to give recommendations to Minister of Justice and Police Chandrikapersad Santokhi, who has been very outspoken on the need for increased border security.

¶6. (SBU) Possible recommendations include the establishment of an official point-of-entry closer to the town of Nieuw Nickerie staffed with military police, customs, and civilian police. The current entry point lies roughly 45 kilometers south of the district's population center on a poor unpaved, at time almost impassable, road at a ferry

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landing. Almost all border crossers bypass this out-of-the-way stop and take small boats directly to spots along the riverbank closer to town as part of the "back-track." The commission is also looking at ways to structure the entry and immigration procedures and to develop a boat registration system.

¶7. (U) In the context of the commission's work, Minister of Foreign Affairs Lygia Kraag-Keteldijk visited the border in May for a personal look at the "back-track." She said her Ministry was working to improve control over the border by developing a comprehensive visa policy for those frequently traveling back and forth across the border as currently very few border crossers possess visas.

BARNES